

# RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE – FOUR OR FEWER UNITS

## Part I. Definitions and Scope

These Standards of Practice provide guidelines for a *real estate inspection* and define certain terms relating to these *inspections*. *Italicized* words in these Standards are defined in Part IV, Glossary of Terms.

- A. A *real estate inspection* is a survey and basic *operation* of the *systems* and *components* of a *building* which can be reached, entered, or viewed without difficulty, moving obstructions, or requiring any action which may result in damage to the property or personal injury to the *Inspector*. The purpose of the inspection is to provide the Client with information regarding the general *condition* of the *building(s)*. Cosmetic and aesthetic *conditions* shall not be considered.
- B. A *real estate inspection* report provides written documentation of material defects discovered in the *inspected building's systems* and *components* which, in the opinion of the *Inspector*, are *safety hazards*, are not *functioning* properly, or appear to be at the ends of their service lives. The report may include the *Inspector's* recommendations for correction or further evaluation.
- C. *Inspections* performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice are not *technically exhaustive* and shall apply to the *primary building* and its associated *primary parking structure*.

## Part II. Standards of Practice

A *real estate inspection* includes the *readily accessible systems* and *components* or a *representative number* of multiple similar *components* listed in SECTIONS 1 through 9 subject to the limitations, exceptions, and exclusions in Part III.

### SECTION 1 – Foundation, Basement, and Under-floor Areas

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Foundation *system*
  2. Floor framing *system*
  3. Under-floor ventilation
  4. Foundation anchoring and cripple wall bracing
  5. Wood separation from soil
  6. Insulation
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Determine* size, spacing, location, or adequacy of foundation bolting/ bracing *components* or reinforcing *systems*
  2. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

### SECTION 2 – Exterior

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Surface grade directly adjacent to the *buildings*
  2. Doors and windows
  3. Attached decks, porches, patios, balconies, stairways, and their enclosures
  4. Wall cladding and trim
  5. Portions of walkways and driveways that are adjacent to the *buildings*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* door or window screens, shutters, awnings, or security bars
  2. *Inspect* fences or gates or *operate* automated door or gate openers or their safety *devices*
  3. Use a ladder to *inspect systems* or *components*

### SECTION 3 – Roof Covering

- A. Items to be inspected:
  1. Covering
  2. Drainage
  3. Flashings
  4. Penetrations
  5. Skylights

- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. Walk on the roof surface if in the opinion of the *Inspector* there is risk of damage or a *hazard* to the *Inspector*
  2. Warrant or certify that roof *systems*, coverings, or *components* are free from leakage

### SECTION 4 – Attic Areas and Roof Framing

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Framing
  2. Ventilation
  3. Insulation
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* mechanical attic ventilation *systems* or *components*
  2. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

### SECTION 5 – Plumbing

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Water supply piping
  2. Drain, waste, and vent piping
  3. Faucets and *fixtures*
  4. Fuel gas piping
  5. Water heaters
  6. *Functional flow* and *functional drainage*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. Fill any *fixture* with water or *inspect* overflow drains or drain-stops, or evaluate backflow *devices*, waste ejectors, sump pumps, or drain line cleanouts
  2. *Inspect* or evaluate water temperature balancing *devices*, temperature fluctuation, time to obtain hot water, water circulation, or solar heating *systems* or *components*
  3. *Inspect* whirlpool baths, steam showers, or sauna *systems* or *components*
  4. *Inspect* fuel tanks or *determine* if the fuel gas *system* is free of leaks
  5. *Inspect* wells or water treatment *systems*

### SECTION 6 – Electrical

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Service equipment
  2. Electrical panels
  3. Circuit wiring
  4. Switches, receptacles, outlets, and lighting *fixtures*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Operate* circuit breakers or circuit interrupters
  2. Remove cover plates
  3. *Inspect* de-icing *systems* or *components*
  4. *Inspect* private or emergency electrical supply *systems* or *components*

### SECTION 7 – Heating and Cooling

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Heating equipment
  2. Central cooling equipment
  3. Energy source and connections
  4. Combustion air and exhaust vent *systems*
  5. Condensate drainage
  6. Conditioned air distribution *systems*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* heat exchangers or electric heating elements
  2. *Inspect* non-central air conditioning units or evaporative coolers
  3. *Inspect* radiant, solar, hydronic, or geothermal *systems* or *components*
  4. *Determine* volume, uniformity, temperature, airflow, balance, or leakage of any air distribution *system*
  5. *Inspect* electronic air filtering or humidity control *systems* or *components*

### SECTION 8 – Fireplaces and Chimneys

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Chimney exterior
  2. Spark arrestor
  3. Firebox
  4. Damper
  5. Hearth extension

- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* chimney interiors
  2. *Inspect* fireplace inserts, seals, or gaskets
  3. *Operate* any fireplace or *determine* if a fireplace can be safely used

## SECTION 9 – Building Interior

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Walls, ceilings, and floors
  2. Doors and windows
  3. Stairways, handrails, and guardrails
  4. Permanently installed cabinets
  5. Permanently installed cook-tops, mechanical range vents, ovens, dishwashers, and food waste disposers
  6. Absence of smoke alarms
  7. Vehicle doors and openers
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* window, door, or floor coverings
  2. *Determine* whether a *building* is secure from unauthorized entry
  3. Operate or test smoke alarms or vehicle door safety *devices*
  4. Use a ladder to *inspect systems* or *components*

### Part III. Limitations, Exceptions, and Exclusions

#### A. The following are excluded from a *real estate inspection*:

1. *Systems* or *components* of a *building*, or portions thereof, which are not *readily accessible*, not *permanently installed*, or not *inspected* due to circumstances beyond the control of the *Inspector* or which the Client has agreed or specified are not to be *inspected*
2. Site improvements or amenities, including, but not limited to; accessory *buildings*, fences, planters, landscaping, irrigation, swimming pools, spas, ponds, waterfalls, fountains or their *components* or accessories
3. Auxiliary features of *appliances* beyond the *appliance's* basic *function*
4. *Systems* or *components*, or portions thereof, which are under ground, under water, or where the *Inspector* must come into contact with water
5. Common areas as defined in California Civil Code section 1351, et seq., and any dwelling unit *systems* or *components* located in common areas
6. *Determining* compliance with manufacturers' installation guidelines or specifications, building codes, accessibility standards, conservation or energy standards, regulations, ordinances, covenants, or other restrictions
7. *Determining* adequacy, efficiency, suitability, quality, age, or remaining life of any *building*, *system*, or *component*, or marketability or advisability of purchase
8. Structural, architectural, geological, environmental, hydrological, land surveying, or soils-related examinations
9. Acoustical or other nuisance characteristics of any *system* or *component* of a *building*, complex, adjoining property, or neighborhood
10. *Conditions* related to animals, insects, or other organisms, including fungus and mold, and any hazardous, illegal, or controlled substance, or the damage or health risks arising there from
11. Risks associated with events or *conditions* of nature including, but not limited to; geological, seismic, wildfire, and flood
12. Water testing any *building*, *system*, or *component* or *determine* leakage in shower pans, pools, spas, or any body of water
13. *Determining* the integrity of hermetic seals at multi-pane glazing
14. Differentiating between original construction or subsequent additions or modifications
15. Reviewing information from any third-party, including but not limited to; product defects, recalls, or similar notices
16. Specifying repairs/replacement procedures or estimating cost to correct
17. Communication, computer, security, or low-voltage *systems* and remote, timer, sensor, or similarly controlled *systems* or *components*
18. Fire extinguishing and suppression *systems* and *components* or *determining* fire resistive qualities of materials or assemblies
19. Elevators, lifts, and dumbwaiters

20. Lighting pilot lights or activating or *operating* any *system*, *component*, or *appliance* that is *shut down*, unsafe to *operate*, or does not respond to *normal user controls*
21. *Operating* shutoff valves or *shutting down* any *system* or *component*
22. Dismantling any *system*, *structure*, or *component* or removing access panels other than those provided for homeowner maintenance

#### B. The *Inspector* may, at his or her discretion:

1. *Inspect* any *building*, *system*, *component*, *appliance*, or improvement not included or otherwise excluded by these Standards of Practice. Any such *inspection* shall comply with all other provisions of these Standards.
2. Include photographs in the written report or take photographs for *Inspector's* reference without inclusion in the written report. Photographs may not be used in lieu of written documentation.

### Part IV. Glossary of Terms

**\*NOTE:** All definitions apply to derivatives of these terms when *italicized* in the text.

**Appliance:** An item such as an oven, dishwasher, heater, etc. which performs a specific *function*

**Building:** The subject of the *inspection* and its *primary parking structure*

**Component:** A part of a *system*, *appliance*, *fixture*, or *device*

**Condition:** Conspicuous state of being

**Determine:** Arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to a *real estate inspection*

**Device:** A *component* designed to perform a particular task or *function*

**Fixture:** A plumbing or electrical *component* with a fixed position and *function*

**Function:** The normal and characteristic purpose or action of a *system*, *component*, or *device*

**Functional Drainage:** The ability to empty a plumbing *fixture* in a reasonable time

**Functional Flow:** The flow of the water supply at the highest and farthest *fixture* from the *building* supply shutoff valve when another *fixture* is used simultaneously

**Inspect:** Refer to Part I, "Definition and Scope", Paragraph A

**Inspector:** One who performs a *real estate inspection*

**Normal User Control:** Switch or other *device* that activates a *system* or *component* and is provided for use by an occupant of a *building*

**Operate:** Cause a *system*, *appliance*, *fixture*, or *device* to *function* using *normal user controls*

**Permanently Installed:** Fixed in place, e.g. screwed, bolted, nailed, or glued

**Primary Building:** A *building* that an *Inspector* has agreed to *inspect*

**Primary Parking structure:** A *building* for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the *primary building*

**Readily Accessible:** Can be reached, entered, or viewed without difficulty, moving obstructions, or requiring any action which may harm persons or property

**Real Estate Inspection:** Refer to Part I, "Definitions and Scope", Paragraph A

**Representative Number:** Example, an average of one *component* per area for multiple similar *components* such as windows, doors, and electrical outlets

**Safety Hazard:** A *condition* that could result in significant physical injury

**Shut Down:** Disconnected or turned off in a way so as not to respond to *normal user controls*

**System:** An assemblage of various *components* designed to *function* as a whole

**Technically Exhaustive:** Examination beyond the scope of a *real estate inspection*, which may require disassembly, specialized knowledge, special equipment, measuring, calculating, quantifying, testing, exploratory probing, research, or analysis



# COMMERCIAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Originally Adopted January 4, 2002  
Revised April 3, 2007 – Effective July 1, 2007

## Part I. Definitions and Scope

These Standards of Practice provide guidelines for a *commercial building inspection* and define certain terms relating to these *inspections*. **Italicized** words in these Standards are defined in Part IV, Glossary of Terms.

- A. A *commercial building inspection* is a survey and basic *operation* of the *systems* and *components* of a *building*. The purpose of the *inspection* is to provide the Client with information regarding the general *condition* of the *building(s)*.
- B. A *commercial building inspection* report identifies material deficiencies observed in the *inspected building's components* and *systems* which, in the opinion of the *Inspector*, are not *functioning* as intended or are at the ends of their service lives. The report may be written or verbal or any other agreed upon format.
- C. *Inspections* performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice are not *technically exhaustive* and shall apply to the *primary building(s)*.

## Part II. Standards of Practice

A *commercial building inspection* includes the *readily accessible systems* and *components* or a *representative number* of multiple similar *components* listed in SECTIONS 1 through 8 subject to the limitations, exceptions, and exclusions in Part III.

### SECTION 1 – Foundation, Basement, and Under-floor Areas

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Foundation *system*
  2. Floor framing *system*
  3. Under-floor ventilation
  4. Foundation anchoring and cripple wall bracing
  5. Wood separation from soil
  6. Insulation
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Determine* size, spacing, location, or adequacy of foundation bolting/bracing *components* or reinforcing *systems*
  2. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

### SECTION 2 – Exterior

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Surface grade directly adjacent to the *buildings*
  2. Doors and windows
  3. Attached decks, porches, patios, balconies, stairways, and their enclosures
  4. Wall cladding and trim
  5. Portions of walkways and driveways that are adjacent to the *buildings*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* door or window screens, shutters, awnings, or security bars
  2. *Determine* whether a *building* is secure from unauthorized entry
  3. *Inspect* fences or gates or *operate* automated door or gate openers or their safety *devices*
  4. Use a ladder to *inspect systems* or *components*

### SECTION 3 – Roof Covering

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Covering
  2. Drainage
  3. Flashings
  4. Penetrations
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. Walk on the roof surface if in the opinion of the *Inspector* there is risk of damage or a hazard to the *Inspector*
  2. Warrant or certify that roof *systems*, coverings, or *components* are free from leakage

### SECTION 4 – Roof Framing

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Framing
  2. Ventilation
  3. Insulation
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* suspended ceiling *systems* or remove suspended ceiling panels
  2. *Inspect* mechanical attic ventilation *systems* or *components*
  3. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

### SECTION 5 – Plumbing

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Water supply piping
  2. Drain, waste, and vent piping
  3. Faucets and *fixtures*
  4. Fuel gas piping
  5. Water heaters
  6. *Functional flow* and *functional drainage*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. Fill any *fixture* with water or *inspect* overflow drains or drain-stops, or evaluate backflow *devices*, waste ejectors, sump pumps, or drain line cleanouts
  2. *Inspect* or evaluate water temperature balancing *devices*, temperature fluctuation, time to obtain hot water, water circulation, or solar heating *systems* or *components*
  3. *Inspect* whirlpool baths, steam showers, or sauna *systems* or *components*
  4. *Inspect* fuel tanks or *determine* if the fuel gas *system* is free of leaks
  5. *Inspect* wells or water treatment *systems*

### SECTION 6 – Electrical

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Service *equipment*
  2. Electrical panels
  3. Circuit wiring
  4. Switches, receptacles, outlets, and lighting *fixtures*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* high voltage *systems* or *components*
  2. *Operate* circuit breakers or circuit interrupters
  3. Remove covers from any electrical panel, *equipment*, or outlet
  4. *Inspect* de-icing *systems* or *components*
  5. *Inspect* private or emergency electrical supply *systems* or *components*

### SECTION 7 – Central Heating and Cooling

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Central heating and cooling *equipment*
  2. Energy source and connections
  3. Combustion air and exhaust vent *systems*
  4. Condensate drainage
  5. Conditioned air distribution *systems*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Operate* heating, cooling, or ventilation *equipment*
  2. *Inspect* heat exchangers or electric heating elements
  3. *Inspect* radiant, solar, hydronic, or geothermal *systems* or *components*
  4. *Inspect* electronic air filtering or humidity control *systems* or *components*
  5. *Inspect* or review any *equipment* printouts or displays
  6. *Determine* volume, uniformity, temperature, airflow, balance, or leakage of any air distribution *system*

### SECTION 8 – Building Interior

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
  1. Walls, ceilings, and floors
  2. Doors and windows
  3. Stairways, handrails, and guardrails
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Inspect* window or floor coverings
  2. *Operate* or test smoke alarms or automated door safety *devices*
  3. *Determine* adequacy of exiting
  4. Use a ladder to *inspect systems* or *components*

### Part III. Limitations, Exceptions, and Exclusions

#### A. The following are excluded from a *commercial building inspection*:

1. *Systems or components of a building*, or portions thereof, which are not *readily accessible*, not *permanently installed*, or not *inspected* due to circumstances beyond the control of the *Inspector* or which are specifically excluded by the *Inspector*
2. Site improvements or amenities, including, but not limited to; accessory *buildings*, fences, planters, landscaping, irrigation, swimming pools, spas, ponds, waterfalls, fountains or their *components* or accessories
3. Signage
4. Deficiencies that fall within the scope of routine maintenance
5. Nonessential features of *inspected appliances*
6. *Systems or components*, or portions thereof, which are under ground, under water, or where the *Inspector* must come into contact with water
7. *Determining* compliance with manufacturers' installation guidelines or specifications, building codes, accessibility standards, conservation or energy standards, regulations, ordinances, covenants, or other restrictions
8. *Building* ingress or egress, compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act or other accessibility standards, regulations, ordinances, covenants, or other restrictions
9. *Determining* adequacy, efficiency, suitability, quality, age, or remaining life of any *building*, *system*, or *component*, or marketability or advisability of purchase
10. Structural, architectural, geological, environmental, hydrological, land surveying, or soils-related examinations
11. Acoustical or other nuisance characteristics of any *system* or *component* of a *building*, complex, adjoining property, or neighborhood
12. *Conditions* related to animals, insects, or other organisms, including fungus and mold, and any hazardous, illegal, or controlled substance, or the damage or health risks arising there from
13. Risks associated with events or *conditions* of nature including, but not limited to; geological, seismic, wildfire, and flood
14. Water testing any *building*, *system*, or *component* or *determine* leakage in shower pans, pools, spas, or any body of water
15. *Determining* the integrity of hermetic seals at multi-pane glazing
16. Differentiating between original construction or subsequent additions or modifications
17. Reviewing information from any third-party, including but not limited to; product defects, construction documents, and recalls or similar notices
18. Specifying repairs/replacement procedures or estimating cost to correct
19. Communication, computer, security, or low-voltage *systems* and remote, timer, sensor, or similarly controlled *systems* or *components*
20. Fire extinguishing and suppression *systems* and *components* or *determining* fire resistive qualities of materials or assemblies
21. Elevators, escalators, lifts, and dumbwaiters
22. Fireplaces and their chimneys
23. Lighting pilot lights or activating or *operating* any *system*, *component*, or *appliance* that is *shut down*, unsafe to *operate*, or does not respond to *normal user controls*
24. *Operating* shutoff valves or *shutting down* any *system* or *component*
25. Dismantling any *system*, *structure*, or *component* or removing access panels

#### B. The *Inspector* may, at his or her discretion:

1. *Inspect* any *building*, *system*, *component*, *appliance*, or improvement not included or otherwise excluded by these Standards of Practice. Any such *inspection* shall comply with all other provisions of these Standards unless agreed otherwise.
2. Include photographs in the written report or take photographs for *Inspector's* reference.

### Part IV. Glossary of Terms

**\*NOTE:** All definitions apply to derivatives of these terms when *italicized* in the text.

- Appliance:** An item such as an oven, dishwasher, heater, etc. which performs a specific *function*
- Building:** The subject of the *inspection*
- Commercial Building:** A structure other than a residential dwelling structure of one to four units or its primary parking structure. Refer to Part I, "Definitions and Scope", Paragraph A
- Component:** A part of a *system*, *appliance*, *fixture*, or *device*
- Condition:** Conspicuous state of being
- Determine:** Arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to a *building inspection*
- Device:** A *component* designed to perform a particular task or *function*
- Equipment:** An *appliance*, *fixture*, or *device*
- Fixture:** A plumbing or electrical *component* with a fixed position and *function*
- Function:** The normal and characteristic purpose or action of a *system*, *component*, or *device*
- Functional Drainage:** The ability to empty a plumbing *fixture* in a reasonable time
- Functional Flow:** The flow of the water supply at the highest and farthest *fixture* from the *building* supply shutoff valve when another *fixture* is used simultaneously
- High Voltage:** Electrical energy 600 volts or more
- Inspect:** Refer to Part I, "Definition and Scope", Paragraph A
- Inspector:** One who performs a *commercial building inspection*
- Normal User Control:** Switch or other *device* that activates a *system* or *component* and is provided for use by an occupant of a *building*
- Operate:** Cause a *system*, *appliance*, *fixture*, or *device* to *function* using *normal user controls*
- Permanently Installed:** Fixed in place, e.g. screwed, bolted, nailed, or glued
- Primary Building:** A *building* that an *Inspector* has agreed to *inspect*
- Primary Parking structure:** A *building* for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the *primary building*
- Readily Accessible:** Can be reached, entered, or viewed without difficulty, moving obstructions, or requiring any action which may harm persons or property
- Representative Number:** Example, an average of one *component* per area for multiple similar *components* such as windows, doors, and electrical outlets
- Shut Down:** Disconnected or turned off in a way so as not to respond to *normal user controls*
- System:** An assemblage of various *components* designed to *function* as a whole
- Technically Exhaustive:** Examination beyond the scope of a *commercial building inspection*, which may require disassembly, specialized knowledge, special equipment, measuring, calculating, quantifying, testing, exploratory probing, research, or analysis

